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Department of the Secretary
of State of Canada

Secrétariat d'État
du Canada

THE STATUS OF DISABLED PERSONS IN CANADA

This brochure is about disabled persons. It is also about the Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada. This department is concerned with "people issues," including citizenship, multi-culturalism and youth. In the Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat, activities foster the goal of equality and full participation of disabled persons in society.

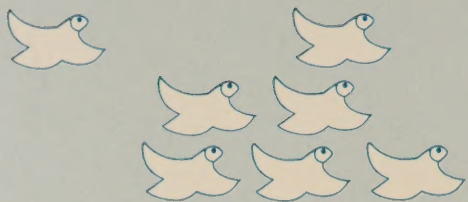


Canada



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POPULATION INVOLVED

ALL CANADIANS



14% DISABLED PERSONS

86% NON-DISABLED PERSONS

- One out of seven Canadians over 15 years of age has an activity limitation due to an impairment.*
 - The probability of personal disability* increases with age.
- *An IMPAIRMENT is an interference with bodily function, such as amputation or paralysis of arms.

*A DISABILITY is a loss of functional ability, such as loss of ability to write by hand.

*A HANDICAP is an environmental and/or social barrier, such as lack of employer awareness of alternatives to writing by hand (e.g. dictation).

These three important definitions are taken from the World Health Organization/World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.

The presence of disabled persons in society and all decisions concerning them impact upon families and friends.





DISABILITY GROUPS

LEARNING
DISABILITIES
(e.g. dyslexia)

PSYCHOLOGICAL
DISABILITIES
(e.g. anorexia)

MENTAL
DISABILITIES
(e.g. Down's
Syndrome)

INVISIBLE
DISABILITIES
(e.g. hemophilia)

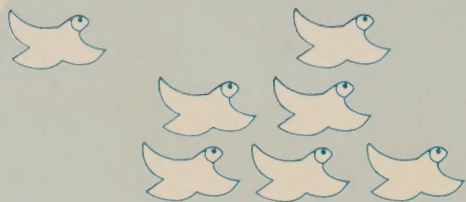
SIGHT
DISABILITIES
(e.g. glaucoma)

PHYSICAL
DISABILITIES
(e.g. cerebral
palsy)

HEARING
DISABILITIES
(e.g. tinnitus)

Disabled persons, like all members of society, have unique aspirations, potential and limitations. Let us not generalize by considering them part of one large group with identical needs.





MILESTONES

- 1980 — Establishment of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped.
- 1981 — United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons.
- 1981-83 — Reports from the Special Parliamentary Committee: *Obstacles*, *Follow-up*, *Progress Report*.
- Response of the Government of Canada co-ordinated by the Secretary of State and collated in *Surmounting Obstacles* (June 1983)
- 1983 — Beginning of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-92) and Canadian commitment to the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons.
- Designation of the Secretary of State of Canada as Minister Responsible for the Status of Disabled Persons in response to *Obstacles* recommendation 130.
- Creation of the Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat as support to the Minister Responsible.
- 1984 — Reaffirmation of the Secretary of State of Canada as Minister Responsible for the Status of Disabled Persons.





MINISTER RESPONSIBLE

The role of the Secretary of State of Canada in his capacity as Minister Responsible for the Status of Disabled Persons is to:

- advocate, in Cabinet, measures by all departments and agencies to improve the status of disabled persons
- provide directions for overall federal policy on disabled persons
- facilitate contact between disabled persons and the federal government
- promote social and economic integration of disabled persons and enhance their participation in Canadian society
- provide co-ordination for activities such as the follow-up to *Obstacles*, and Canada's response to the United Nations World Programme of Action.





SECRETARIAT

The main responsibilities of the secretariat are to:

- develop an overall federal policy
- monitor and co-ordinate, within the federal government, the development and implementation of approaches, policies and programs
- analyze federal, provincial, territorial and international initiatives
- provide an overview on disabled persons' issues
- promote full integration through information and education
- establish and maintain co-operative relations with provincial and territorial officials
- bring voluntary organizations together in pursuit of common goals
- consult with the private sector to seek its greater involvement.





SECRETARIAT'S PRIORITIES

In response to the World Programme of Action (WPA) concerning Disabled Persons, Canada is launching an action plan that will involve federal, provincial and territorial governments, voluntary organizations of and for disabled persons and the private sector. The secretariat is responsible for co-ordinating its development. The follow-up to the federal component of this plan of action will encompass the continued implementation of the *Obstacles* report recommendations. The action plan in Canada is intended to be a tool for promoting concertation and co-operation in the identification of priorities requiring action. This would lead to the development of a societal environment enabling full participation of Canadians with disabilities.

“The Committee does not see that it is asking for anything more than that which has already been done for other groups of Canadians — businessmen, scientists, farmers, labour unions, women, to name just a few. The question is not whether disabled persons are full members of Canadian society. They are.” (Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped, June 1982).





PUBLICATIONS

Brochure — Status of Disabled
Persons Secretariat

Directory of Federal Services for
the Handicapped and Disabled

Surmounting Obstacles. Overview:
1981-1983

World Programme of Action
concerning Disabled Persons

The above publications may be
obtained in print or on audio-cassette
from:

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Secretariat

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